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Maupin's 'City,' 'Homicide' on Channel 4 slate

By Edwin Riddell

LONDON — Armistead Maupin's 1970s San Francisco chronicles "Tales of the City" spearheads Channel 4 Television's \$90 million fall slate, announced this week.

The six-part adaptation by Working Title-Propaganda Films stars Academy Award-winning actress Olympia Dukakis. It was fully funded by Channel 4 and shot in the United States with an all-American cast by director Alastair Reed and script by "thirtysomething" writer Richard Kramer. PBS has bought the series for "American Playhouse."

Among other highlights, Barry Levinson's "Homicide" series from Reeves Entertainment-Baltimore Pictures figures prominently in the drama and film season. The latter also includes the TV premieres of Peter Chelson's "Hear My Song," Stephen Poliakoff's "Close My Eyes" and Peter Greenaway's "Prospero's Books," all funded initially by Channel 4. A showcase of recent independent U.S. films includes "Wild at Heart," "My Own Private Idaho" and "Mississippi Masala."

In introducing the fall schedule, Channel 4 director of programs John Willis said that audiences for the channel were now running at around 11%. Revenue for the station, which became an independent entity Jan. 1, is on target, he

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said, allowing an additional \$23 million to be put into programming next year.

Willis also revealed that Channel 4's highly successful "Big Breakfast" show, seen as a big threat to ITV's rival GMTV, now has more than 2 million viewers.

Like a number of British channels this fall, Channel 4 will be marking the 30th anniversary of the assassination of President Kennedy. In "As It Happened — The Killing of JFK," former Texas governor John Connally gives his last interview before his recent death. Connally apparently told a surprised Channel 4 team that their program was the first time in 25 years that anyone had asked him what happened in Dallas. □